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SOCHI WATCH

- **6:30 a.m.** Canada faces Sweden in the women's curling gold-medal match.
- **10 a.m.** Canada and the U.S. once again face off for women's hockey gold.
- **10:30 a.m.** Rosalind Groenewoud goes for the inaugural gold in women's ski halfpipe. GREG DOWNS/FOR METRO

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PAGES 12 & 13

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City cycle-track plan stumbles over first hurdle

Travel time. Converting one lane of 1 Street SE to cycle track would add 30 to 60 seconds to motorists' afternoon commutes, city models are projecting

ROBSON FLETCHER
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City councillors tapped the brakes Wednesday on a plan to start building a $20-million network of separated cycle lanes downtown that would begin with the removal of one lane of motor-vehicle traffic on 1 Street SE.

After more than five hours of often passionate debate, a recommendation to incorporate 1.7 kilometres of the busy north-south route into the proposed Centre City Cycle Track Network was defeated by a 4-4 vote at the city's transportation and transit committee. (Tie votes count as defeats.)

The vote doesn't rule out the construction of a physically separated cycle lane on 1 Street SE but, as the first test of city councillors' willingness to go ahead with the plan as laid out by city staff earlier this month, it signals a bumpy road ahead for advocates of the cycle-track network.

Quoted

"The people who live, work and play there are the ones saying, 'Yes, let's do this.' And the ones who drive through are saying, 'Let's not spend another 30 to 60 seconds driving.'"

Coun. Brian Pincott, summarizing his view on the difference in opinion between people who live downtown and those who don't on the core-area cycle-track plan.

The committee heard hours of opinions from cycling advocates, downtown business associations, and area residents.

Most spoke in favour of the plan, like Greg Hart of Safer Calgary, who said the cycle track would decrease the likelihood of human error leading to collisions between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Others expressed concerns over the impact on motor vehicles, like Silver Dragon restaurant owner Annette Fung, who said the cycle track would hamper parking and traffic flow in Calgary's already crowded Chinatown area.

In the end Couns. Brian Pincott, Gian-Carlo Carra, Druh Farrell and Evan Woolley voted in favour of the recommendation, while Couns. Shane Keating, Peter Demong, Joe Magliocca and Ward Sutherland voted against it.

Magliocca and Sutherland are not regular members of the committee but both declared an interest in the matter and took part in the meeting.

Coun. Sean Chu, a regular committee member and perhaps the most outspoken opponent of the 1 Street SE plan, was in British Columbia during the meeting but tweeted Wednesday evening about the "good news."

"A great day for the common sense majority," Chu said in the tweet.

The matter will now go to city council for a vote by all 14 councillors and Mayor Naheed Nenshi.

Nenshi suggested this week building a temporary cycle track on 1 Street SE as a trial, before going ahead with concrete barriers, but city staff said Wednesday that would add about $620,000 in "sunk costs" that would be irrecoverable if the city did go ahead with the $3.7-million project.

CANADA'S GOLDEN GIRLS

Canadian bobsledders Kaillie Humphries, left, and Heather Moyse celebrate their gold-medal win after the women's bobsled competition at the 2014 Winter Olympics Wednesday in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia. Story, page 27. MICHAEL SOHN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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CBE. 'Mini-school' idea praised

While devastating, Alberta's flood may have helped forge a path for non-conventional school designs, says the provincial education minister.

Jeff Johnson said Wednesday he "absolutely" sees promise in the "mini-school" concept pitched by parents to Calgary Board of Education administrators and trustees during a meeting to discuss a space "crisis" Tuesday.

Parents suggested that schools made up of an established gym and office space attached to modulars could be built quicker and cheaper and help address capacity issues plaguing developing communities with no schools and plenty of kids.

"We've seen a lot of partnerships, we've seen a lot of school boards and community groups come together and forge partnerships with infrastructure that maybe they wouldn't have otherwise," Johnson said.

Alberta Education did erect a temporary school for students from displaced Elbow Park elementary on the fields of nearby Earl Grey School. The portable classrooms came in around $4 million and the gym cost $1 million.

CBE estimates suggest a standard kindergarten to Grade 4 school, like the ones previously approved by the province, could come in at around $14.5 million.

Johnson said the gym and portables at Earl Grey can be moved to other places where space is in high demand once Elbow Park kids move into a replacement school in two years' time. "We'll be looking at how that works and maybe looking to replicate it in other areas of the province."

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Cabbies divided on being forced to work nights on weekends

Taxi tensions. Broker says new rules 'social engineer' industry

Debate revved among Calgary cabbies and industry watchers Wednesday after a proposal was revealed that would require every one of the city's taxis to be running on Friday and Saturday nights.

Metro first reported the move Tuesday, one which is being steered by the city's chief livery officer Marc Halat, and does not require the approval of city council or cab brokers.

Halat wants conditions added to licences requiring all 1,526 cabs operating in the city to be ready for fares from 4 p.m. to 4 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights as well during special events like the Calgary Stampede, Halloween and during periods of inclement weather.

Javed Iqbal, a driver with Checker Yellow Cabs, said he believes many drivers will be angry by a city decision to require them to be in service on Friday and Saturday nights, as well as during special events. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Good for consumers

Sandy Jenkins with consumer advocacy group Voters For Taxis applauded the move to require all Calgary cabs to be in service during peak hours. Jenkins said he still preferred an open-market approach to the cab industry, but deemed the newest proposal from livery officials a "good compromise."

But Javed Iqbal, a daytime driver for Checker Yellow Cabs, wasn't sold on whether the plan would actually work. He works from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and then trades off the car to a night driver. But Iqbal said it sometimes takes him two hours to clean the car, get it to his peer and put it back into service. He also previously worked the night shifts, but frequently dealt with rude drunks and struggled to maintain a family life.

"I don't think they (city officials) should be able to say when we have to work," he said. "Everybody has his own life, his own problems."

But Sukmander Brar, a cabbie who claims to work Friday and Saturday nights year-round, said the extra vehicles on the road would be a welcome sight. He said just last week an intoxicated passenger vomited in his car, putting him out of service for three hours. During that time, the backup of calls built up.

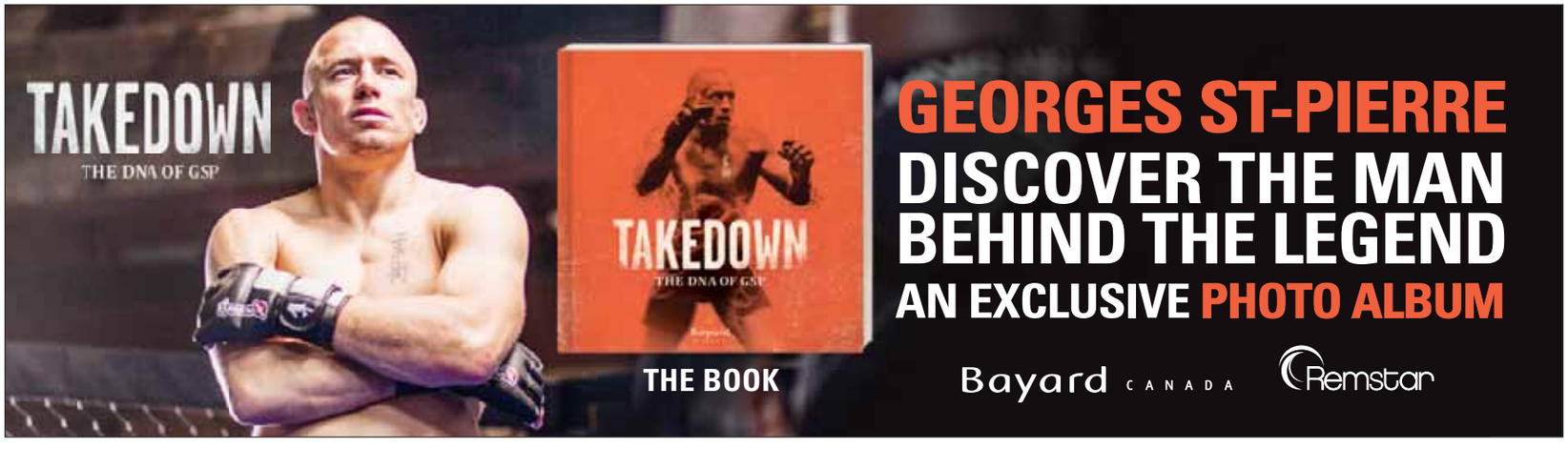
"We can't keep up," he said. "It's good money for me, but we need more."

Halat, meanwhile, said Wednesday he expects some push-back from the industry and drivers initially.

"It's a soft-sell to begin with," Halat said. "I hope we don't have to escalate that accountability piece, but that's what we're about — accountability."

Halat hopes to have the measures in place by this year's Stampede.

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO



Transit funding. Look at out-of-towners, not the vulnerable: Committee

City councillors came loaded with questions for transit leaders Wednesday, making clear their concerns that vulnerable Calgarians were being hit hard by proposed fare hikes.

Calgary Transit officials contended they plan on tightening up discounted fares in a fair way over time, stressing the need to find nearly $18 million more annually to fund the city's ambitious 30-year plan.

"What is our version of modest and incremental?" asked Coun. Peter Demong, pointing to big hikes to the seniors pass.

City transit's head planner Neil McKendrick assured that seniors, students and low-income riders weren't in the crosshairs, adding Calgary offers some of the country's best subsidies.

Councillors were also disturbed to learn 25 per cent of the reserved parking spots are being gobbled up by out-of-town riders.

Calgary Transit hopes to glean five per cent more from fare revenue to help fill its $7.7-million share of the RouteAhead plan. METRO FILE

"That's problematic for me," said inner-city Coun. Evan Woolley.

Coun. Brian Pincott pointed out the roughly $1-million budget gap between parking revenue and maintenance and suggested planners look at "how we have people who live outside of Calgary not be subsidized as much by Calgary taxpayers." BRYAN WEISMILLER/METRO

Radita family

Murder charges laid in alleged neglect of teen

Calgary police have now laid first-degree murder charges against the parents of a 15-year-old who allegedly died due to neglect.

Rodica Radita, 51, and Emil Marian Radita, 62, remain in custody.

The victim has been identified as Alexandru Gabriel Radita. The teen, who suffered from Type-1 diabetes, died of bacterial sepsis from complications due to neglect and starvation, police allege. METRO

A streetcar? No desire

Inner-city transit projects on hold

Calgary Transit officials put a stake in lingering hopes for the resurgence of a Calgary streetcar, citing sky-high startup costs, inflexibility and relatively low tourist draw.

At a committee meeting Wednesday, councillors also discussed prospective plans for an inner-city bus loop.

Coun. Evan Woolley stressed the need to "move quickly" but was outvoted by his colleagues in his push to establish specific timelines for city officials to report back. METRO

Busing fees may surge with student numbers

Crunch coming. Parents urged to entreat MLAs for more school dollars to avoid heftier bills

JEREMY NOLAIS
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It could be a perfect storm, warns a public-school official: Cash reserves are shrinking as thousands more students will soon ride the bus.

Calgary Board of Education officials conceded during a presentation Tuesday that, with no school space left in the deep south, 2,000 to 3,000 more students in that area alone could be forced to hop aboard a bus and ride to the inner city for classes over the next two years.

The system also drained more than $2 million from its transportation reserve fund to help cover busing costs for the current school year after the province froze its fuel-contingency funding, a decision that CBE officials said last year cost the system $2.3 million.

Currently, $600,000 remains in that fund.

Frank Coppinger, superintendent for facilities and environmental services, conceded after Tuesday's presentation that the system may be forced to turn to parents to cover a funding shortfall — that is, unless the province ponies up more dough.

"It's going to be subject to budget discussions as to how it's funded, but we've been moving towards user pay, so it may mean an increase in fees," he told Metro.

Annual fee

$295

Calgary parents currently pay $295 annually per student riding a yellow school bus, with the exception of those with kindergartners, who pay $215.

"I think we're going to have live through — somehow — this coming September. The critical year is going to be September 2015."

The CBE managed to hold the line on busing fees for the 2013-14 school year but did move to separate those charges from noon-hour supervision fees the year prior.

That decision will cost families with kids sticking around at school to eat their lunches an additional $230 per head come 2014-15.

Calgary parents may need to brace for hikes to busing fees with more kids due to hop aboard the school-bound shuttles in the years ahead. METRO FILE

Call of Duty play date ends in charges

Two men accused of bringing pellet guns to the University of Lethbridge say they were playing a real-life version of a video game.

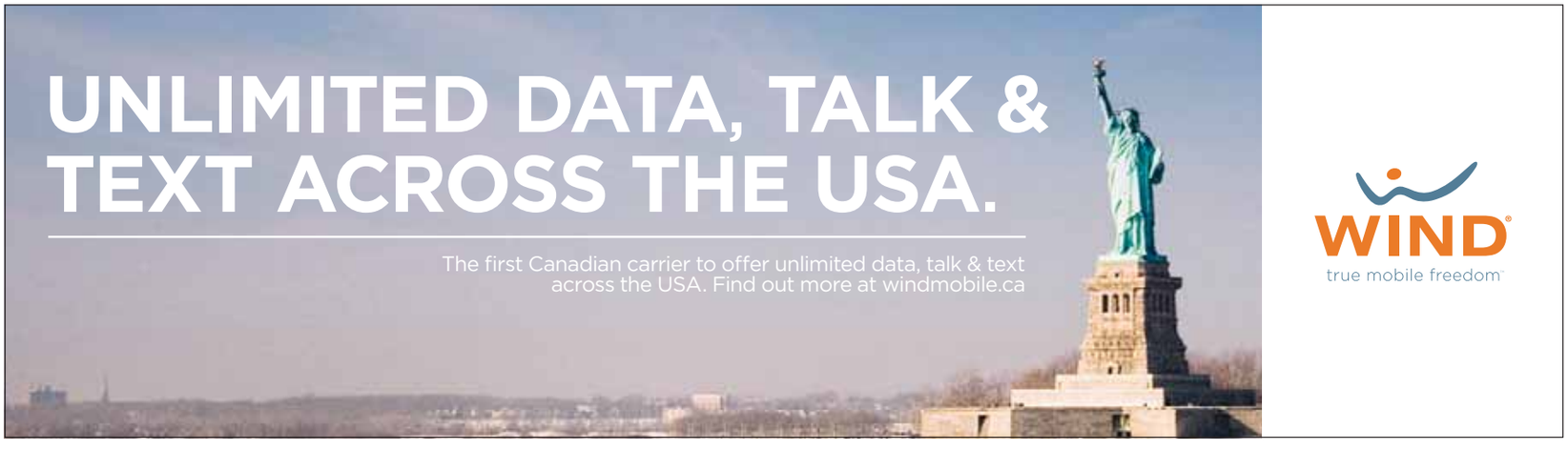
Police say security at the southern Alberta university reported that two men were walking around the campus with handguns on Tuesday.

The suspects were quickly taken into custody.

Both men say they were re-enacting Call of Duty, a popular first-person shooter video game.

Brad Keller, 21, and Anthony Small, 25, have been charged with possession of a weapon dangerous to the public.

The two Lethbridge men are set to appear in court March 25. THE CANADIAN PRESS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Const. Lara Sampson, of the police Retail Industry Crime Initiative, holds up one of nearly 1,600 designer labels recovered from organized crime. BRYAN WEISMILLER/METRO

Over $200K in clothes recovered

Major bust. Police say that retail theft is on the rise

BRYAN WEISMILLER
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Police headquarters doubled as a high-end clothing boutique Wednesday as investigators unveiled the results of a major bust.

More than 1,600 designer labels — from Abercrombie & Fitch to Gucci and Canada Goose — were displayed with a collective price tag of roughly $230,000.

Const. Lara Sampson said the items were stolen from Calgary shops by drug-hungry crooks and other low-level heisters in an organized crime ring.

Sampson is part of a relatively new police unit targeting retail theft, which she suggested was on the rise over the past few years.

"We have several, several pockets of people that are running at different levels of organized retail crime," she told reporters.

In this case and most others, investigators believe the goods were likely going to be transferred to a middleman and sold through online channels for a pittance of the retail cost.

And while it may seem like a wicked score, Sampson warned shoppers to think twice before shelling out for deeply discounted apparel.

"Don't buy that product in the first place," she said. "We will seize the item as stolen.

"So not only are you out your jacket, you're also out the money you paid to purchase it."

Investigators are now trying to reach Calgary retailers to help them identify the items.

Police believe the thefts happened in Calgary and the surrounding area between October and December 2013. Investigators urged potential victims or anyone with information to email them at RICI@calgarypolice.ca.

Northern Alberta

Two killed in crash

Two people are dead following a fiery crash involving semi trucks on a notoriously dangerous highway in northern Alberta.

The collision happened on a stretch of Highway 63, about 70 kilometres south of the oilsands city of Fort McMurray.

RCMP say the two semis were travelling in opposite directions and crashed head-on.

One of the trucks was hauling diesel fuel and burst into flames. Both drivers died. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bowness. Charges laid in hit-and-run that left 91-year-old man dead

Calgary police charged a driver Wednesday in relation to a pedestrian death that happened a month earlier.

The fatal collision happened just before noon on Jan. 18 when a woman was backing a pickup truck out of a driveway in the 8500 block of 48 Avenue NW, according to police, and struck a 91-year-old man on the sidewalk.

The man, walking with a walker, "became entangled with the rear hitch of the truck," police said in a release.

He was then unknowingly dragged for roughly 125 metres before coming free from the truck, which then left the scene, police said.

The man was taken to hospital where he later died.

Police said Wednesday 26-year-old Jacoba Jean Davidson has been charged with "unsafe backing." METRO

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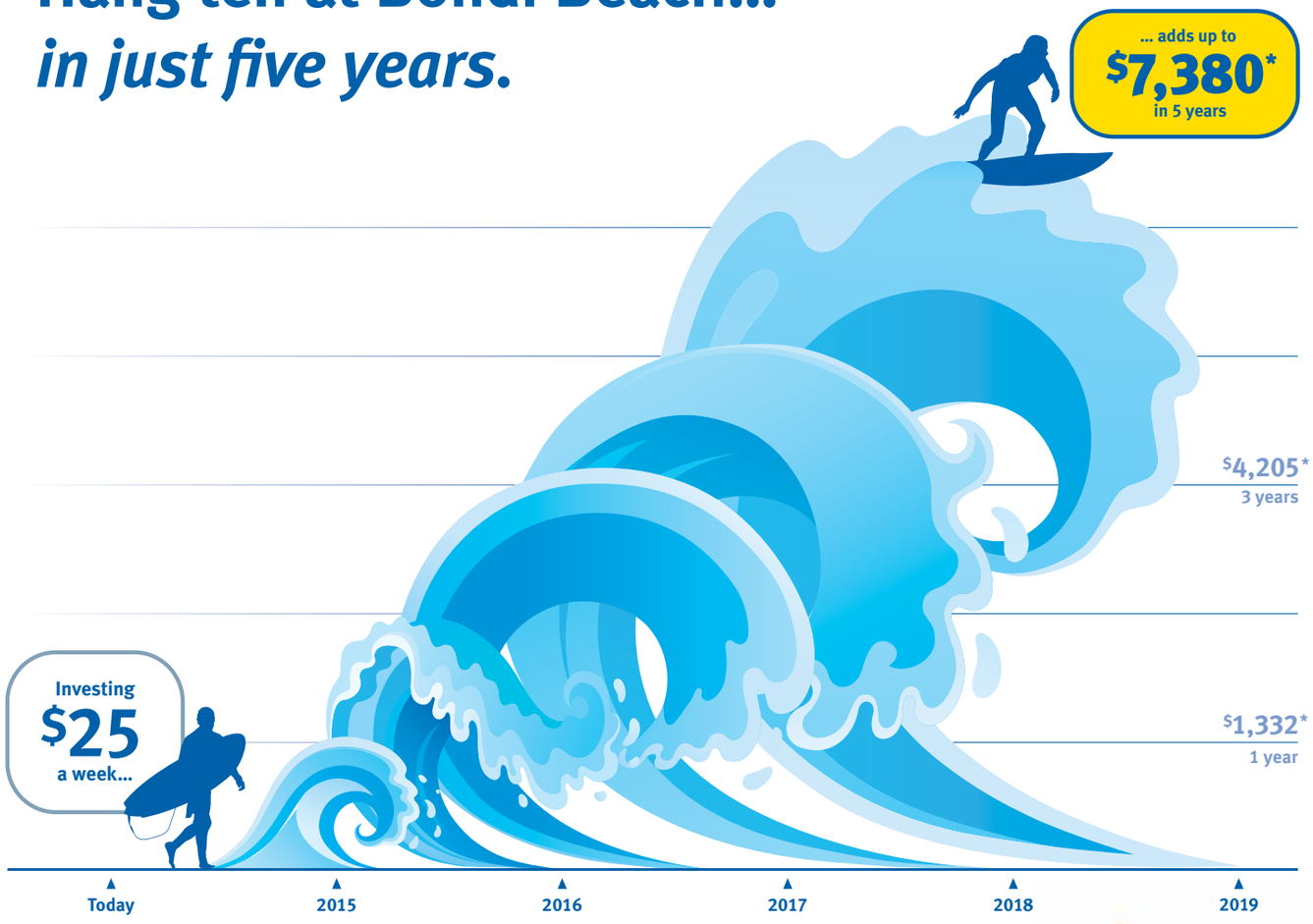

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Hide-and-seek. RCMP hopes pig carcass will lead to missing bodies

The Saskatchewan RCMP is hoping a bright-orange pig carcass will help them locate missing bodies in Saskatchewan's river system.

Equipped with a radio transmitter and GPS tracker, members of the RCMP's major crimes historical case unit (HCU) placed the 180-pound pig into the South Saskatchewan River at the Saskatoon Canoe Club on Wednesday morning.

"The whole idea of this project is to track this pig's movements as it flows down the river and, hopefully, that will give us some insight as to where bodies end up," said Cpl. Tyler Hadland, of the HCU, noting six bodies are presumed to be in the South Saskatchewan River.

"The Saskatoon historical case unit has been annually searching the river, by plane and by boat, for the past number of years and we haven't been able to recover any of these bodies," he said. "So it's quite a mystery."

RCMP said Wednesday's launch is the project's second phase, as a pig-carcass with similar tracking devices was placed into the North Saskatchewan River in North Battleford in the fall of 2013.

However, the carcass only travelled 20 kilometres before it was found on a sandbar a week later. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO IN SASKATOON

A member of the Saskatchewan RCMP places a bright-orange pig carcass into the South Saskatchewan River at the Saskatoon Canoe Club on Wednesday morning.
MORGANMODJESKI/METRO IN SASKATOON

Brazeau lands gig at strip joint

New job. Brazeau has been without a steady Senate paycheque since his suspension in November

Patrick Brazeau has gone from sitting in the Senate to helping run a strip club.

The suspended senator, who faces criminal charges in connection with the expense scandal that roiled the august upper chamber last year, is now working as a manager at an Ottawa strip joint.

Brazeau has been spotted inside the Barefax Gentlemen's Club in recent days, but he declined Wednesday to speak to reporters camped outside the establishment who trailed him inside to the door of his office.

Carmelina Bentivoglio, the daughter of the club's owner, said Brazeau interviewed for a job as a day manager two weeks ago. He'll be responsible for "scheduling, hiring, firing, inventory — just like any other job," she said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Odd jobs

Patrick Brazeau also tried his hand as a columnist for the Halifax version of Frank magazine, but was canned after one-and-a-half columns, prompting an apology from the editor for subjecting readers to Brazeau's "narcissistic ramblings."

Suspended Senator Patrick Brazeau, inset, has found work at the Barefax strip club, shown near Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Wednesday.
FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS; INSET: THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

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Ukraine president, protesters call truce

Negotiations.
Earlier violence that killed 26 had fuelled fears the nation could be sliding toward a messy breakup

Ukraine's embattled president and leaders of the protests that have been roiling the country agreed Wednesday on a truce to halt the violence that has killed 26 people and injured more than 425 others.

A protest leader was quoted as saying the government pledged not to attack an opposition encampment in central Kyiv while further negotiations unfold.

President Viktor Yanukovych met with opposition leaders and the two sides agreed to halt the violence and to hold talks on ending bloodshed, a statement on the presidential website said. The statement did not give any further details.

Vitali Klitschko, one of the leaders of the protests that have sought to keep Ukraine open to Europe and out of a close political and economic alliance with Russia, was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying that Yanukovych agreed that there would be no attempt to storm the protesters' encampment on the main square of downtown Kyiv.

Flames from burning barricades of tires and refuse leapt into the air at the square for a second night, as protesters demanding Yanukovych's resignation showed no sign of yielding.

The truce announcement came hours after the president replaced the army chief and the military vowed a national anti-terrorist operation to restore order. Officials have often referred to the protesters who have demanded Yanukovych's resignation as "terrorists."

Political and diplomatic manoeuvring has continued, with both Moscow and the West eager to gain influence over this former Soviet republic. Three EU foreign ministers — from Germany, France and Poland — were heading to Kyiv on Thursday to speak with both sides before an emergency EU meeting back in Brussels to consider sanctions against those responsible for the recent violence in Ukraine.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An issue of identity

The recent violence has been the worst in nearly three months of anti-government protests that have paralyzed Kyiv.

- The two sides are locked in a battle over the identity of this nation of 46 million, whose loyalties are divided between Russia and the West.

Anti-government protesters protect themselves with shields during clashes with riot police in Kyiv's Independence Square, the epicentre of the country's current unrest, Wednesday, before the president and leaders of the protest called a truce. SERGEI CHUZAVKOV/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ex-pats in North America

Tentative reaction

Ukrainians living in the United States and Canada reacted with tentative optimism Wednesday to news of a truce in the violence-torn country, while still shedding tears for their homeland and nervously wondering what will come next.

Yaakov Dov Bleich, who is the chief rabbi of Kyiv and Ukraine, reacted cautiously when interviewed in New York. He noted the enormity of clashes between government forces and protesters Tuesday that left at least 26 people dead.

Ukraine, he said, won't work as a dictatorship. "Certain red lines were crossed yesterday," Bleich said.

"I think it's going to be very hard to rebuild trust between people and the president."

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Escaping the death grip

Snake on the loose.
An Alberta man is lucky to be alive after his Burmese python coiled around him

MARCO VIGLIOTTI
Metro in Regina

The Burmese python is one of the world's five largest snakes. GETTY IMAGES FILE

Say that one day your beloved pet, whom you had watched sprout since his infancy, managed to break free of his warm, well-ventilated enclosure and began to wriggle his frame around you.

If you had any time to think, you might reflect that although you've been a benevolent caretaker all this time, you're now gasping for air as the ungrateful pet squeezes you ever tighter. Heartbreaking stuff, right?

The pet in question isn't a Labradoodle, and this isn't a story from somewhere in Southeast Asia.

Rather, it's a true tale that involves one of the largest snakes on the planet — the feared Burmese python — and a basement in Alberta.

"(The owner) had this rather large dangerous snake he kept in his basement," explained Pat Dunford, an Alberta conservation officer, who did not specify the location of the home. "He went down there to check on it and because it was loose it started to coil around him."

Luckily, the man was able to escape — albeit with a newfound and well-deserved fear of the tropical snake. He quickly called conservation officers to help him handle the creature.

The Burmese python is one of the world's five biggest snakes, a collection that also includes the African rock python. The latter is the same species of snake that killed two boys in New Brunswick last summer after escaping from its cage.

Unlike that situation, in which it appears the owner didn't have a permit, the owner in Alberta was able to legally possess the snake thanks to a grandfathering clause in provincial regulations.

"It was during a time in which we were changing regulations and becoming more strict," Dunford explained. "(The owner) got a shelter permit because he possessed it legally before we made our regulations more restrictive, so we grandfathered the possession of certain pets for a time."

Quoted

"After a day they went in there and because the temperature was much cooler, the snake was so lethargic that it was not aggressive at all."

Pat Dunford, an Alberta conservation officer, describing how officials corralled a loose Burmese python.

Once officers arrived, they developed a game plan to safely apprehend the snake.

As the Burmese python thrives in blisteringly hot conditions, Dunford said, officers decided to turn off the heat in the house in hopes that cooler conditions would slow the snake down.

It worked. "After a day, they went in there and because the temperature was much cooler, the snake was so lethargic that it was not aggressive at all," he explained. "They were able actually to help the owner simply get it back into its secure container."

But this is Canada — could I really meet a pet crocodile on the loose?*

The deaths of two young boys in New Brunswick last summer at the hands of an escaped African rock python alerted the country to the potential dangers of unusual pets.

But is there really such a threat in famously frigid Canada of encountering somebody's dangerous exotic animal?

It appears to depend on where you live, but generally, it seems that Canada poses a far bigger threat to odd pets than they do to us.

"Fortunately (in Alberta) we haven't had too many issues with exotics getting into the wild," Pat Dunford, an Alberta conservation officer, told Metro, noting the province does have a detailed action plan to handle these sorts of situations.

He said dangerous animals imported from sunnier locales, such as tropical snakes, would probably only survive during the summer months and wouldn't "last long when the temperature gets colder."

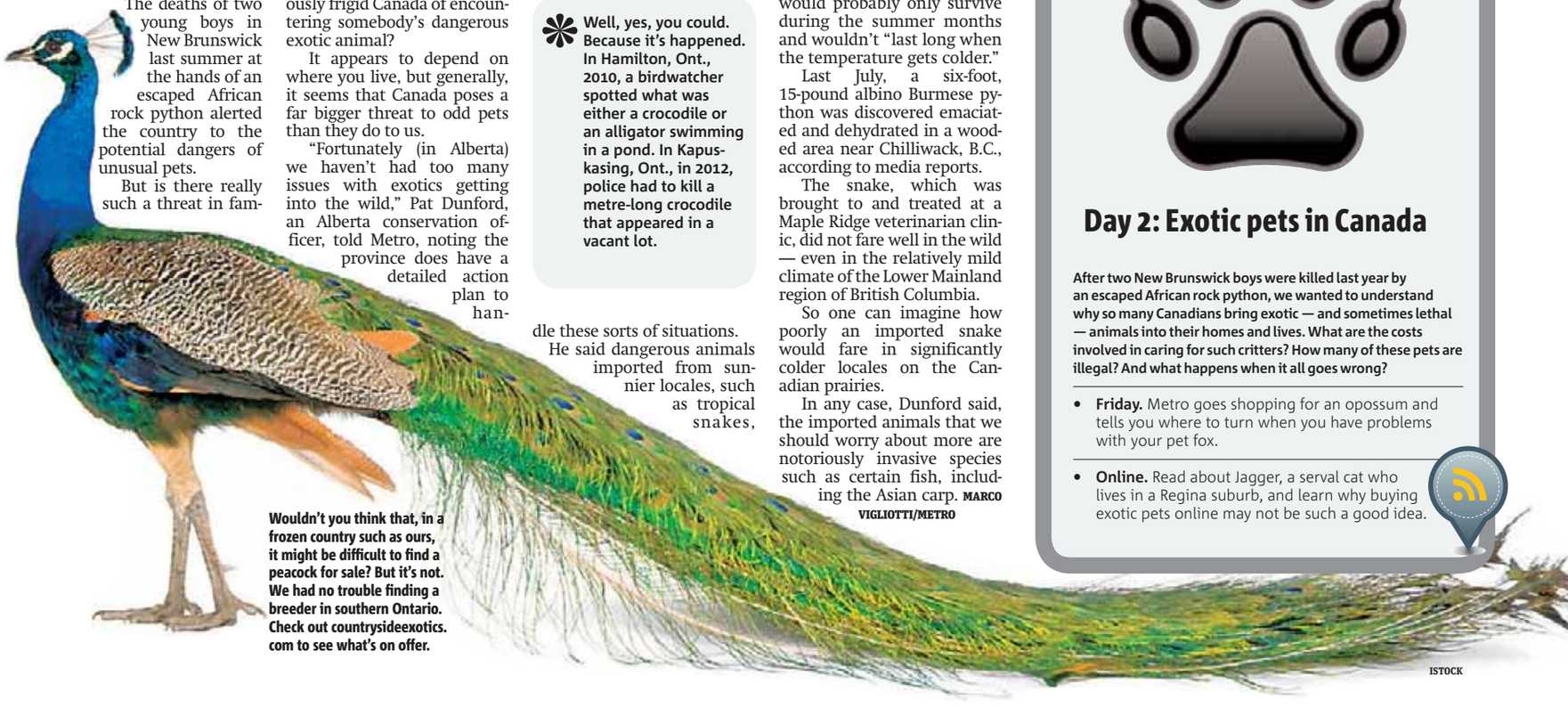
Last July, a six-foot, 15-pound albino Burmese python was discovered emaciated and dehydrated in a wooded area near Chilliwack, B.C., according to media reports.

The snake, which was brought to and treated at a Maple Ridge veterinarian clinic, did not fare well in the wild — even in the relatively mild climate of the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia.

So one can imagine how poorly an imported snake would fare in significantly colder locales on the Canadian prairies.

In any case, Dunford said, the imported animals that we should worry about more are notoriously invasive species such as certain fish, including the Asian carp. MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO

* **Well, yes, you could. Because it's happened. In Hamilton, Ont., 2010, a birdwatcher spotted what was either a crocodile or an alligator swimming in a pond. In Kapuskasing, Ont., in 2012, police had to kill a metre-long crocodile that appeared in a vacant lot.**


Wouldn't you think that, in a frozen country such as ours, it might be difficult to find a peacock for sale? But it's not. We had no trouble finding a breeder in southern Ontario. Check out countrysideexotics.com to see what's on offer.

ISTOCK

Day 2: Exotic pets in Canada

After two New Brunswick boys were killed last year by an escaped African rock python, we wanted to understand why so many Canadians bring exotic — and sometimes lethal — animals into their homes and lives. What are the costs involved in caring for such critters? How many of these pets are illegal? And what happens when it all goes wrong?

- **Friday.** Metro goes shopping for an opossum and tells you where to turn when you have problems with your pet fox.
- **Online.** Read about Jagger, a serval cat who lives in a Regina suburb, and learn why buying exotic pets online may not be such a good idea.

The hot-button hedgehog

Sure, they're cute, but in some parts of the U.S., they also seem to be controversial —partly, it appears, because of a debate over whether they spread foot-and-mouth disease. According to online forum hedgehogcentral.com, the animals are illegal in California, Hawaii, Georgia and the five boroughs of New York City. Maine has also had restrictions, and the site describes the situation in Pennsylvania as "all out war on hedgehogs within the state."

Hedgehog advocates insist the animals are not a problem. Z.G. Standing Bear, treasurer of the International Hedgehog Association, told Torstar News Service last year that six U.S. states and several cities ban hedgehogs for "all kinds of reasons" based on "no facts at all." "They're benign. There is nothing dangerous about them. That's what irritates us so much; they get this bad reputation," he said.

ISTOCK

An African pygmy hedgehog

Hedgehogs may be in for a tough time north of the border, too. Last year, a Toronto city councillor asked municipal staff to study adding animals including hedgehogs to the city's list of prohibited species. Flamingoes, penguins, walruses, vultures and seals are also in his sights. METRO

What happens when it all goes wrong

In the past couple of decades, there've been a number of high-profile cases in Canada of exotic pets killing their owners:

• In 2007, 32-year-old Tanya Dumstrey-Soos was mauled by a tiger owned by her fiancé at a farm in 100 Mile House, B.C., while several children, including one of her own, watched. It's thought that the tiger didn't intentionally attack her, but rather was trying to play with her skirt as she stood outside its enclosure talking to it. The tiger, Gangus, was the only one of three tigers on the farm who wasn't declawed, and Dumstrey-Soos died of her injuries. Animals on the farm also included a lion and a lemur, and a variety of officials and animal welfare advocates said they'd had ongoing concerns about the farm.

• In 1992, 28-year-old Mark Neville of Brampton, Ont., was strangled to death by his five-metre-long pet Burmese python. At the time, the death prompted calls for consistent legislation on exotic pets, but unlike many provinces, Ontario still doesn't have provincial standards on the issue.

The investigating coroner said Neville had visited a friend's house where there was a shedding cat, and it's believed that later, when he put his hand in the python's enclosure, it smelled food and attacked.

• In early 2010, 66-year-old Norman Buwalda was killed at his home in Southwold, Ont., as he entered the cage of a 650-pound Siberian tiger. No one witnessed the attack, and police said they don't know why it happened. Buwalda was the chairman of the Canadian Exotic Animal Owner's Association, and had five wild cats, including a lion and a cougar. Six years previously, a 350-pound tiger seriously injured a boy visiting the property. METRO

You know that an octopus can make a tasty deep-fried appetizer, but did you know people keep them as pets? Read Metro tomorrow to find out which Hollywood star once had a cephalopod about the house.

ISTOCK

'If you're not prepared to devote your life to your pet monkey, please don't get one'

Lessons from Darwin. The former owner of the Ikea monkey says having a primate in the house takes time, energy and resources

ROSS ROMANIUK
Metro in Regina

After her pet monkey's romp around a Toronto-area Ikea, Yasmin Nakhuda has been struggling to get it back. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

She and what had been her pet monkey have made headlines in Canada for more than a year, since the primate managed to get out of her car outside a Toronto Ikea store and scamper around the property in late 2012.

Yasmin Nakhuda, a Toronto lawyer, is trying to get Darwin back through an appeal of an Ontario court ruling that has since kept the monkey at a primate sanctuary.

Metro asked Nakhuda about her case, and about having primates as pets.

Are you optimistic about your chance of reclaiming legal ownership of Darwin through your court appeal?
We are still trying to get him back but since the matter is still being reviewed for appeal purposes, I cannot make any further comments regarding chances of winning.

Do you feel that monkeys such as Darwin make good pets for people in Canada?
Monkeys are not pets for everyone. But if the owner is very dedicated, loving, educated about primate needs and ready and willing to learn, then a monkey can be more than a pet — it can become part of one's family. Monkeys are intelligent and it is untrue that all monkeys are aggressive. Some monkeys work as licensed waiters in Japan, while others are trained and work as helpers for the disabled.

Visit metronews.ca to watch a video of monkeys working as waiters in Japan.

Do you have any advice for other people who might be considering trying to acquire monkeys or other animals that are deemed exotic or foreign to Canada?
If you are not prepared to devote your life to your pet monkey, then please don't get one. However, if you do and you are able to earn the love and respect of your pet monkey, a pet monkey can be one of the greatest companions you can have in your life.

As for other exotic pets, I own an African Grey parrot and a Scarlet Macaw and they are equally great pets given their intelligence, but again, they need a lot of attention and care and one has to be able to afford expensive toys, food and supplements on an ongoing basis.

Have an adventure with Darwin

Darwin's Ikea shopping trip may be over in real life, but it continues online in the form of a video game which you can find at ikeamonkeyshirt.com. Barnabas Wornoff, an animation professor at Toronto's Seneca College, took about a week to create the game with a group of former students. Players can control the shearling coat-wearing monkey as it wanders through the parking lot in search of Allen keys, pegs and other parts needed to build a Billy wall shelf, all the while dodging rogue shopping carts and Ikea customers. Wornoff said the monkey dances when the game is completed. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Cuts sow seeds of discontent in Greece

A farmer shouts slogans during a protest outside the Greek parliament against government tax policies in Athens on Wednesday. Greece's conservative-led government has committed to continue spending cuts and economic reforms in exchange for billions of euros in international rescue loans. THANASSIS STAVRAKIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Showing off our true patriot love for Facebook

O (boy) Canada.
With glowing faces ... from our smartphones we stand on guard for the social network

Canada was one of the first countries to go completely crazy for Facebook and now the social network is saying we're leading the charge with mobile usage, too.

There are 19 million Canadians who access Facebook at least once a month and 14 million who log in every single day, says Jordan Banks, the head of Facebook Canada. Those numbers haven't really changed since the summer, but mobile is growing.

The number of users who log in with a phone or tablet at least once a month is now at 15 million, up about 15 per cent from 13 million. And the number of mobile users accessing Facebook daily is up about six per cent to 10 million, from 9.4 million in August. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Record-breaking buy

Facebook is buying mobile messaging service WhatsApp for up to $19 billion US in cash and stock, by far the company's largest acquisition.

Market Minute

DOLLAR 90.24¢ (-1.08¢)

Natural gas: $6.10 US (+$0.54)
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TSX 14,119.73 (+42.26)

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Rogers biggest buyer

Wireless spectrum auction raises $5.27B for feds

The federal government raked in $5.27 billion in the latest wireless spectrum auction. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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OLYMPICS BRING OUT THE WORST

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

Olympic officials love to wax eloquent about how sports can help us celebrate humanity as one, as can be illustrated in this history of the Games:

1896: The modern Olympic Games are created to promote world peace.

1897: World peace declared.

This timeline, though exhaustive, is not wholly accurate. In fact, the Olympics solve society's problems with only the same proficiency that pop songs alleviate world hunger.

While I won't claim to know the hearts of the amazing athletes, I can talk about the average sports fans' humanity during these Olympics in Sochi. Their emotions are not always the Olympian ideal.

Rage: Sports always attracts angry fans: hockey fans who would gladly dismember a 14-year-old linesman; baseball fans apoplectic about strike calls they can't possibly see; MMA fans who fill in most of evolution's missing links. But the Olympics teach us that the most terrifying creature of all is the figure skating fan who is convinced their favourite skaters were stiffed.

It's satisfying in a way. People who mock me for yelling at the TV during a Bruins game positively have a Salchow every four years because someone on Team Canada got "robbed." It's an Olympic tradition. This wouldn't happen if Olympic figure skating had fighting like the North American version, but that's a debate for later.

Fear: What do you suppose is the hardest job in the world? Doctor? Air traffic controller? Olympian? No, the Olympics prove time and again that the hardest job is creating a mascot that is not a horrifying abomination.

It's a life rule. There are no funny clowns, no sexy feet and no mascots that will not haunt your dreams. The Athens mascots appeared to be phalluses wearing coloured condoms, perhaps to laud the birth of civilization. The London mascots were one-eyed demon creatures, probably to promote the city's Olympian level of CCTV cameras.

At first the Sochi bear seemed like a fool-proof idea. Who doesn't like teddy bears? However, the version at the opening ceremonies looked like a drunken uncle who should delete his Internet browsing history more often. Meanwhile, the version that stalks Olympic venues almost looks like an everyday bear mascot — except that he has cold, dead shark eyes. He will have children leaving their night lights on until at least the 2016 Summer Games. And who knows what monstrosity we might be faced with then?

Schadenfreude: If my workplace and favourite bar are any indication, two things always get big cheers from crowds at the Olympics:

1) A Canadian hockey player scores a goal.

2) An athlete from another country falls over.

The sport might be one fans had not heard of 10 minutes ago — Ladies' Super-G Bobsled Cross — but if there's a chance at gold, we want our opponents crushed. And, if necessary, their pelvises.

In short, the Olympics aren't the best of humanity, on either side of the TV screen. They're just … humanity, which includes braggarts, fools and outright villains, to go along with the kind-hearted, the wise and the heroes.

And despite my cynical take, I still believe in heroes. After all, somebody has to slay the damn bear.

ZOOM

All that glitters isn't gold

ANNE OLLILA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Finnish reindeer dabbed with paint

A reindeer is seen with fluorescent antlers after a test in which Finnish herders dabbed it with fluorescent paint. Rudolph the reindeer is having a glittering antler makeover — the latest attempt to halt some of the thousands of road deaths of the roaming caribou in the wilds of Finland.

Anne Ollila, of the Finnish Reindeer Herders' Association, says the antlers of 20 reindeer have been painted with various fluorescent dyes to see how the animals react and whether the paints are resistant to the harsh Arctic climate.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Roaming free

200,000

If successful, animals with glittering antlers will be free to roam Lapland — a vast, deserted area in northern Finland where herders tend to some 200,000 reindeer.

Reflective tape

- The Finnish Reindeer Association says reflectors and reflective tape have proven unsuccessful as reindeer have torn them off — and road signs warning drivers of roaming reindeer often are stolen by tourists as souvenirs.

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

Looks like oversharing social media users are learning from their mishaps as a wave of apps touting online anonymity are quietly creeping into cyberspace. Users wanting to publicly praise or put down that pretty girl, berate their boss or wax poetic have carved out online spaces to do so without having to worry about said pretty girl, boss, etc.

ISTOCKIMAGES

Whisper:
Posts run the gamut from guilty pleasures to deep thoughts (#ThereIsNoProof) in this Tumblr-like confessional space.

Shrtwv:
Location-based sharing means you share your anonymous thoughts, photos, etc., with other Shrtwv users in the same vicinity (no, this is not meant to be the latest Grindr)

Secret:
Like other social media sites, you're still sharing your "secrets" with your pals, but you get to do so incognito.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: The idea of Trudeau rolling papers was originally the Cons' plan to disrupt the Liberals. Do they help or hinder Trudeau's image?

@Russell_Barth: the irony of these papers (AND the #cpc's mad assertions) is that Justin isn't *actually* going to legalize #pot

@chlobotxo: i think it's hilarious. It helps by showing the Cons are traditional bullies

@ac_awesome: So instead of saying he flip-flops, opponents are accusing him of Zigzags.

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

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SCENE

The takedown of the mask of Georges

Documentary. Former UFC champion reveals his obsessive compulsive disorder, how it drove him to succeed, and what makes him tick in new film

STEVE GOW
scene@metronews.ca

Georges St-Pierre credits his success in mixed martial arts with his obsessive compulsive disorder. CONTRIBUTED

One would expect it'd take a lot to embarrass someone who gets paid millions to beat people up for a living but ultimate fighting champion Georges St-Pierre admits blushing when seeing his rural father fake a more esteemed French accent in the latest documentary about his life.

"A lot of scenes like this I would've changed but (producers) didn't want to," admitted St-Pierre during a recent interview to promote the documentary Takedown: The DNA of GSP.

"There were a lot of things I didn't want to show (but) this is not my movie; I didn't decide what to show; the (filmmakers) decided."

Premiering this Thursday at select theatres Canada-wide, the slick documentary that covers the French Canadian's rise to UFC champ, his fateful knee injury and stunning comeback is also very personal — illustrated by GSP's own acceptance that he suffers from obsessive compulsive disorder.

"My obsessive compulsive problem that I have (is) good when you're an athlete," said St-Pierre.

"I'm crazy but that's what you need to be champion in the sport.

"All my life I've been (focused on) how I can make myself a better martial artist — everything I've learned in my life has been for that purpose."

Certainly those habits are on display in Takedown as fans learn how sleep deprivation, avoiding sidewalk cracks and even heavily concentrated fury has turned GSP into a remarkable mixed martial artist.

In fact, the unpretentious pugilist insists even vacating the title after a controversial win in November was a response to his own affliction.

"I stopped because mentally, my health was in jeopardy," said St-Pierre.

"I've never been a victim in my life," he adds.

"Everything I've done, I did it by choice. "Nobody ever forced me to fight. I did it because I wanted to and that's the same reason why I'm taking a break — because I want to."

Georges St-Pierre says there were many things he didn't want to show in this doc. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Georges on Georges

- **Georges St-Pierre on revealing his obsessive compulsive disorder in the film.** "Its kind of boring to be a normal person," said St-Pierre. "I surround myself with crazy people and I'm crazy myself so it makes us fun...we all have the ingredients for a good movie."

Watch it

- **Takedown: The DNA of GSP screens in Cineplex theatres across Canada on February 20, 22 and 24.**

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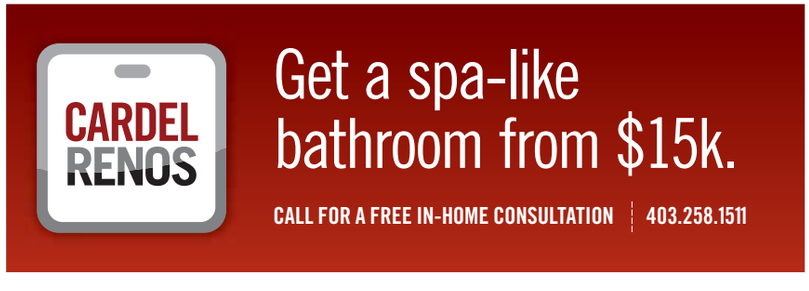


Katy Perry ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Wedding fireworks for Katy and John?

Katy Perry is sending the gossip world into a tizzy by sporting the same diamond ring on a very suspicious finger for the past few days. The first time, we all chalked it up to her being fashionable — but then the singer had the audacity to wear the art-deco-influenced ring yet again at the Elle Style Awards on Tuesday in London. "What does it mmmmeeee-aaaannnnn?" your brain is undoubtedly asking, since we are all conditioned to be concerned with this for some reason. We wish we knew — so far both the Perry and John Mayer camps are being mum on the situation. One thing is for sure: The only way she could troll us any harder is if she started wearing a fake baby bump.

Ellen and Portia don't need a ring to prove their love

Ellen DeGeneres is eager to put to rest rumours circulating in some tabloids that her marriage to Portia De Rossi is on the rocks. "The tabloids had a photo of Portia not wearing her wedding ring. She goes, 'I didn't wear it because when I ride horses and I'm holding the reins, it gives me a blister,'" DeGeneres explains to People magazine. "The truth is — and this is corny — I fall more in love with Portia all the time. I really do. She surprises me all the time. It's what anyone experiences when you find that person that gets you."

Ellen DeGeneres

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Hey LaBeouf, why don't you #STARTCREATING your own stuff?

MELINDA TAUB
Metro World News in New York

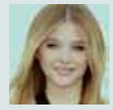
Shia LaBeouf has been all over the tabloids and the blogs and the Twitter lately. But for those who don't follow celebrity gossip on any medium, Shia has them covered too — they just have to look up into the sky.

LaBeouf has taken to skywriting for the third time, hiring planes to write "#STARTCREATING" in the sky above Los Angeles, according to E! Online. His previous messages were "I am sorry Daniel Clowes" and "#STOPCREATING," both in January.

It's great to have Shia's permission to start making stuff. I hope he follows his own advice, since he's never created anything in particular. LaBoeuf's meltdown/art project/generous subsidy to L.A.'s skywriting industry began in December, when his short film, HowardCantour.com, was revealed to be a ripoff of a Daniel Clowes comic, Justin M. Damiano. Since then, he's tweeted a slew of plagiarized quotes and apologies, hired the aforementioned skywriters, and last week held an "art installation" in which he sat in a room with a paper bag over his head reading "I am not famous anymore" while weeping — which some would say was a ripoff of Marina Abromović's The Artist is Present.

In case you can't tell, I am heartily sick of this kid — he ripped an artist off, got caught, and he's been trying to reposition his screw-up as art ever since. I would rather see Justin Bieber get an Oscar than hear another word from LaBeouf on the subject.

Twitter



@ChloeGMoretz
strangest thing just happened to my phone it wouldn't take a charge so i did a full restart and bingo.. charging.. weird.

@NiallOfficial
First time we have all been together for a while now! lookin forward t seeing the lads ! #BRITs2014

@josswhedon
Stairs are so serious

Patrick Stewart

Patrick Stewart has a gay old time with Guardian gaffe

At least Patrick Stewart has a decent sense of humour. The former Star Trek: the Next Generation star was misidentified as gay by the Guardian in an article about X-Men co-star Ellen Page's recent coming out. "The third paragraph originally said, 'Some gay people, such as Sir Patrick Stewart, think Page's coming out speech is newsworthy.' This should have read, 'Some people, such as Sir Patrick Stewart,'" a statement from the newspaper read. Stewart, who married longtime girlfriend Sunny Ozell in September, took it in stride, posting to Twitter, "It makes for a nice change. At least I didn't wake up to the Internet telling me I was dead again."

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LIFE 3

The runway midway

The fashion industry's finest have flocked to New York and London these past two weeks as part of Fall/Winter 2014 Fashion Month. Before they pick up their passports and jet away on the Paris and Milan legs of the journey, here's a taste of what Metro's gurus of glam have witnessed from fashion's front lines thus far.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Tommy Hilfiger (NYC)

The first look? Surprise, surprise, it's plaid. An olive parka, check dress and hiking boots opens the lineup of rugged, outdoorsy looks. The vaguely vintage-flavoured duffle coats, shearling jackets, chunky sweaters, Fair Isle knits and fleece dresses have a sporty athleticism to them that imply Tommy's girls do more than sip hot chocolate inside a lodge.

Major trends: Blanket references in the form of dresses, skirts and coats.

What this will mean for your wardrobe: Durable, classic winter wear that really does marry fashion and function.

Marc by Marc Jacobs (NYC)

The autumn/winter '14 girl is all flamboyant sportiness, dressed for a club night in a mix of ninja and BMX gear. Plus all of the sneaker comebacks we've seen in the past year were rendered forgettable thanks to a single shoe in Crayola shades of red and blue that is part raver, part spaceman.

The major trends: Plays on volume — blanket-style wraps, layering and wide leg trousers.

What this will mean for your wardrobe: Judging by my social media feeds, the shoes were the most memorable takeaway from the show. The more "out there" the sneaker the better.

Bora Aksu (London)

After a handful of monochrome skirted looks, colour appears in the form of Barbie pink. Think Lolita-meets-Victorian-meets-plastic-fantastic. And get ready to embrace that horrible '90s sequin stretch fabric: it's back, sliced into jackets, waistlines and fishtail pencil skirts. Ponchos and capes are popular up top — only, "floatier" than we've seen them before. Here they're more like mosquito nets. Pretty ones, mind you.

The playlist: Lively flamenco with a Carla Bruni interlude.

The key trends: Pink, ponchos, A-line skirts

Issa (London)

The strength, and what unites this collection, with its varying motifs of stamped flowers, bulbous knits and lattice prints, is the size of it all. Everything is big, from the wafting, blanket-like coats that much of the audience is already wearing to the Balenciaga-esque rounded sleeves on outerwear and tops. My standout piece — the wackiest of all the wearable Issa fare — is a zigzag printed monochrome jacket with perfectly curved shoulders.

The major trends: Ponchos and oversized, rounded coats.

What this will mean for your wardrobe in six months' time: Silhouette is going to factor into your buying purchases more than usual.

Vivienne Westwood (London)

This show was about vintage Vivienne Westwood Red Label. Even the colour palette is true to the brand name, with a tongue-in-cheek heart-shaped suit. The looks were positively pared-down: a nostalgic retrospective of eras gone by with headscarves, roomy overcoats, and those ubiquitous Westwood cocktail dresses — all very commercially viable with enough of a dash of the Dame's kook.

The scene: Vivienne Westwood's faithful friends.

What this will mean for your wardrobe in six months' time: Granny chic with headscarves and oversized practical coats.

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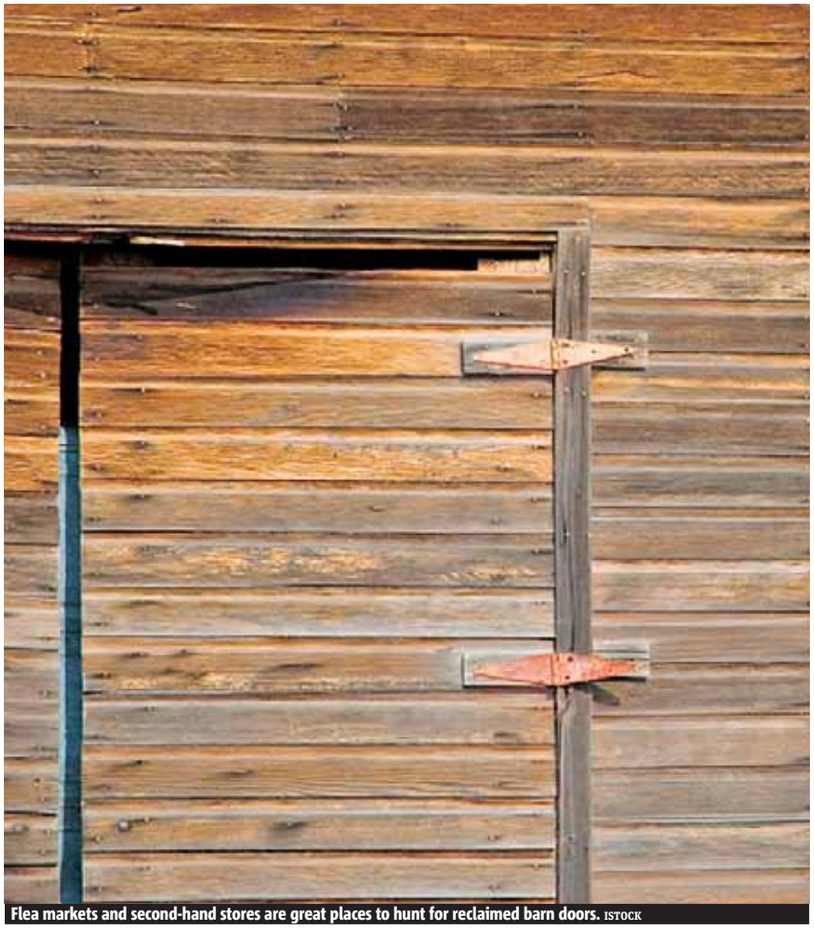

Flea markets and second-hand stores are great places to hunt for reclaimed barn doors. ISTOCK

Rustic barn doors add some natural warmth

DIY. Reclaimed wood is an easy way to give the home a handsome hint of pastoral charm

Every home could use a little country charm, and nothing says country living like a rustic sliding barn door. An inspiring alternative to French doors, this DIY project is a great way to inject natural wood tones into your home or create a popping statement piece with a vivid paint job. It can be adapted for almost any style or budget and will have a lasting impression on visitors for both its design and simplicity.

Find a door that will measure up

For the most authentic look, check out weekend markets or second-hand stores for a reclaimed barn door. It should be slightly larger than the doorway, allowing for a few inches of overlap on either side and at the top. If you're unable to find a proper fit, it's easy to build a custom door after a quick trip to the hardware store. For really large openings, build two doors that will slide together to meet in the middle.

Mount the track above the doorway

Once a door has been chosen, it's time to purchase the hardware necessary to make it glide effortlessly. The right hardware will ensure the door stays safely secured upright and tucked closely to the wall. The best way to achieve this is with a mounted track above the doorway. This option puts a lot of weight on the wall so it's best to screw the mount in to studs.

Install the track brackets

The track brackets are installed to the top of the door and will allow it to hang from the track with rollers. Install one bracket to the top corners of the door following the manufacturer's instructions. A regular sized door will likely only require two rollers but check with a professional if you're unsure.

Attach the rollers and hang the door

Once the brackets are installed, connect the rollers and fasten tightly. With the help of a friend or family member, stand the door upright and slowly lower the rollers on to the track. The track should remain stable and not flex under the weight of the door. Give your new barn door a few tries and do your best line dance move to celebrate.

Rescue Renovation

- For more renovation ideas, tune in to Rescue Renovation on Thursdays at 10 p.m. ET/PT on DIY Network Canada.

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NEUTRAL HUES MAY LURE BUYERS

A fresh coat of paint can work wonders to update the look and feel of your home. That's one reason why taking up the brush and roller is often a recommended upgrade when selling. And when it comes to colour, more often than not, your real estate agent will recommend neutral hues.

"The reason we recommend neutrals is that we want prospective homebuyers to picture themselves living in the home," says Carla Bouchard, a broker with Royal LePage Metro. "A pallet that is too strong may not be to everyone's taste — and yet today's neutrals are giving us many more options beyond the typical beige."

Bouchard points out that neutrals today have a lighter touch with a slight shift toward pastels. These colours are popping up in textiles, countertops and carpets, and can be a great complement to furnishings and art.

She recommends the following tactics to choose paint colours to rejuvenate your surroundings and do the heavy lifting should you decide to sell your home.

Select a shade drawn from prominently displayed artwork, accessory or furnishings. Doing so will ensure that your home is one step closer to "show time" if and when you decide to sell.

Consider adjacent rooms. Think about how your chosen colour will interact with adjacent rooms. Strive for complimentary hues from a colour wheel to provide natural flow from room to room.

Consider what time of day the room will be most often used. While you may be tempted to paint a basement room a bright sunny yellow, if the room is to be used most often in the evening, hues of blue, green or grey may be more appropriate.

Bring home a paint sample or oversized paint chip. Make an informed choice and consider how it looks in your room, and under various lighting conditions, before you commit. *– News Canada*

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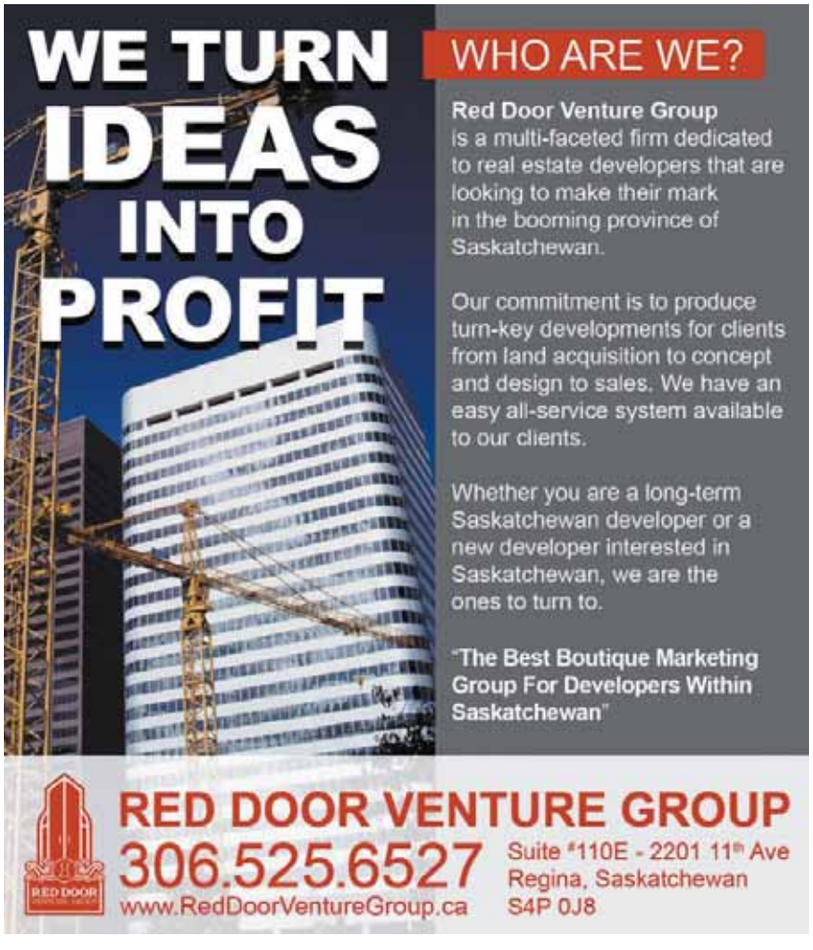
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RED DOOR VENTURE GROUP OPENS DOORS IN SASKATCHEWAN

DEKLOFENAK/SHUTTERSTOCK

Saskatchewan is the land of opportunity for real estate developers and industry insiders, and the Red Door Venture Group is leading the way.

"There is real estate potential as far as the eye can see in Saskatchewan and it is potential that investors should be taking advantage of," says Jaimey Midtdal, Red Door Venture Group's spokesperson.

The Saskatchewan-based real estate marketing company is building on the province's solid economic foundations to provide a variety of the best-valued homes in the country, Midtdal says.

"The amount of undeveloped land has attracted real estate developers who see a bright future and burgeoning economy."

The company is teaming up with outstanding local developers to deliver high-quality developments across the province, Midtdal says. The vast amount of undeveloped land in Saskatchewan has left the real estate market open for new and innovative real estate opportunities for developers and for buyers.

"The province's solid economic foundation has allowed unprecedented growth in Saskatchewan, and the real estate market has followed suit."

Red Door Venture Group works with developers throughout the process, beginning at the land acquisition stage and continuing through to concept, design, and sales.

For more about Red Door Venture Group or to schedule a complimentary consultation, visit RedDoorVentureGroup.ca.

SUBURBAN LIVING WITH AN URBAN STYLE

VIRIDIAN HOMES OFFER SPACE, FLOW

CONTRIBUTED

Viridian is a bright, new open-concept condo development set to wow first-time buyers, (even a few downsizers, too) in Calgary's northwest. With top-quality features, 15 exciting floor plans and modern colour schemes in a vibrant new neighbourhood, Viridian is the best of suburban living with urban style.

Cindy Arevalo, area manager for Viridian, a multi-family division of Trico Communities, said buyers will recognize the value and quality of these units, all with sleek architectural design, standard nine-foot ceilings that give a sense of space and flow, and a pleasing price point.

"Building 1 is comprised of 77 units, with 28 units in Phase 1, which 67 per cent are already spoken for," says Arevalo, who anticipates high demand as units continue to become available to the public. "The strong product, price and community make Viridian a standout in the city."

The one-bedroom, one-bedroom-plus-den, two-bedroom and two-bedroom-plus-den units range from 629 to 966 square feet, in a choice of three chic colour schemes (light, medium and dark). These contemporary palettes pull together wall colours, flooring, carpet, tiles and backsplash, providing a clean, modern look in prices ranging from $178,900 to $289,900.

All units have balconies, available surface parking stalls (some heated underground) and three wow-inspiring upgrade packages, plus standard features that are usually upgrades with other builders, including laminate flooring with in-slab heating, bedroom carpets with eight-pound underlay, granite countertops and 42-inch upper kitchen cabinets.

Bathrooms feature 36-inch vanity cabinets with full-length mirrors, undermount sinks, and 12 x 24-inch ceramic tile. The list of standard features continues, including a front-load stackable washer/dryer, stainless steel appliances and a rain showerhead in the bathroom.

"The units are toasty and cosy, too," Arevalo says. "The focus is on giving first-time homeowners the opportunity to walk right in and be at home, not worry about adding thousands of dollars in upgrades."

Building 1 will be ready by the fall of 2015. Phase 2 will be released during the grand opening this Saturday. When complete, Viridian will have 359 units in total.

PRIME LOCATION

Viridian is located in the new area of Sage Hill at Symons Valley Road and Sage Hill Drive Northwest. Located by Calgary's new ring road, Stoney Trail, Shagannapi Trail and Sarcee Trail, Viridian is just 15 minutes to downtown and nine minutes to the airport. Nearby services are at Creekside Shopping Centre, Beacon Hill Shopping Centre, CrossIron Mills outlet mall and Symons Valley Farmers' Market.

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DISTRICT IN MISSION RAISES THE BAR

Some condos are just designed to fit, and District in Mission is raising the bar.

District is a 59-unit condo project in the heart of Mission, featuring stylish exteriors blending traditional brick and timber with beautiful balconies accentuating the community's historic vibe, says Buss Marketing president Calvin Buss.

Besides the ideal location and unique exteriors, it's what comes on the inside that is really raising the bar.

"The nice thing about the finishing specs is that there is nothing left to upgrade," Buss says. "What would normally be an upgrade is already a standard at District. There is porcelain tile in the bathrooms, carpet in the bedrooms for better sound insulation with hardwood flooring in the kitchen, living room, dining room and foyer."

CONTRIBUTED

The interiors of each District residence have been carefully designed to maximize living space while high-end European Bosch stainless steel appliances and high-quality fixtures complement the nine-foot and 14-foot ceilings.

"These are beautiful and spacious condos that have really set the standard high for quality living," Buss says. "There's quality both inside and out."

The four-storey building will feature a secured two-level heated underground parkade with bicycle storage and a car wash station, as well as an inner courtyard.

The units will range between 464 square feet to 847 square feet with both one or two bedrooms and a variety of floor plans to choose from, each with large outdoor balconies. Prices at District range from $239,900 and more.

District sales centre hours are Monday to Thursday from noon to 6 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. and closed on Fridays. The sale centre can be reached at 403-2631150. For more information, visit mydistrict.ca.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A CORNUCOPIA OF CHARACTER AND RESIDENTS

It's all about location, location, location — and Mission has it all.

The highly coveted neighbourhood of Mission has been dubbed as "restaurant row," the "people street" and a walkers paradise, so it's no small wonder why the area is becoming increasingly popular in which to live.

District in Mission puts residents in the heart of the area located at 18 Ave. and 2 St. SW, says Buss Marketing president Calvin Buss.

District is within walking distance of an assortment of boutique shopping, a delicious assortment of restaurants and coffee shops, schools, medical services, business services, and recreation facilities, including the Talisman Centre and the wide variety of entertainment at Stampede Park.

"Geographically, it doesn't get much better than this," Buss says. "Everything is within walking distance and 17th Avenue is just a short distance away with its own selection of entertainment and dining options. A lot of people that already live in the area are looking to stay in the area, while many people are moving to the area, too."

Mission is the home of the long-running Lilac Festival each May, while 4th Street SW alone has more than 35 restaurants on 13 blocks featuring food from countries all over the world. The 4th Street BRZ (business revitalization zone) is constantly striving to improve and beautify the area to continually boost its fresh energy.

"Mission is already great now and people don't have to wait for it to develop into something," Buss says. "Mission is brimming with character and residents feel as though they are part of an amazing community.

"There's literally something for everyone in Mission and people want to live here and play here."

For more, visit mydistrict.ca.

HIGH STANDARDS ARE THE NORM

With a commitment to excellence and high standards of design, it's no wonder Boulevard Investments and its partner companies have been an inner-city staple for more than 12 years and counting.

Boulevard Investments specializes in the redevelopment and new construction of condos in Calgary's bustling core while continually delivering quality and satisfaction, says Buss Marketing president Calvin Buss.

"District condominiums are an excellent example of this commitment; each residence in the building is fully upgraded. The building is going to set a high standard for Mission."

With more than 14 completed projects in 12 years, Boulevard Investments not only delivers quality to its customers, but enhances the communities it builds within.

In addition to District in Mission, other projects in Altadore and Parkhill/Stanley Park also display the builder's proven track record for high standards in design, quality, execution and client satisfaction.

Boulevard Investments delivers quality, evidenced by its new home warranty program with each residence, as well as its commitment to safe and quiet homes that are energy efficient.

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CUE
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This recipe serves four. PHOTOS LEILA ASHTARI

Stefano serves a cutlet above the rest

FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

"Veal cutlets were in regular dinner rotation at home when I was young," writes Stefano Faita in his book In the Kitchen with Stefano Faita. "I was always so amazed at how quickly my mom made them and got them on the table — they cook up in no time.

"Serve your cutlets with a light side dish, such as sautéed cherry tomatoes (the recipe is right here!), or put a cutlet on a bun with some marinated artichokes. Yum!"

1. To make the Breaded Veal Cutlets: Prepare a breading station by arranging 3 shallow dishes or pie plates with the following: flour in the first; eggs beaten with milk in the second; and bread crumbs, Parmesan and herbs stirred together in the third.

2. Season veal with salt and pepper. Dredge cutlets first in flour, then in egg mixture and lastly in bread crumb mixture.

3. In a large skillet over medium heat, melt butter with oil. When oil is hot, add cutlets and brown on each side, 3 to 5 minutes per side.

4. While cutlets are cooking, make the Sautéed Cherry Tomatoes: In a large sauté pan, melt butter over medium-high heat. When butter is golden brown, add tomatoes. Sprinkle them with sugar and season with salt and pepper. Increase heat to high and sauté tomatoes, stirring gently, until they start to soften and skins begin to wrinkle, about 5 minutes. Add the parsley, marjoram and thyme, mix well and remove from heat.

5. Serve cutlets with Sautéed Cherry Tomatoes.

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Ingredients

Breaded Veal Cutlets
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) all-purpose flour
- 3 large eggs
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) milk
- 1 cup (250 ml) fresh or dry bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tsp (10 ml) chopped fresh herbs, such as sage or rosemary
- 4 large veal cutlets, pounded 1/4 inch (5 mm) thick
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) butter
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil

Sautéed Cherry Tomatoes
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) butter
- 1 1/2 lb (675 g) vine-ripened cherry tomatoes
- 1 tsp (5 ml) sugar
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) each chopped fresh Italian parsley, marjoram, thyme

Cookbook of the Week

Effortless and delicious meals

Stefano Faita goes from the wildly popular TV show In the Kitchen with Stefano Faita to an easy-to-follow and beautifully photographed book of the same name. The collection includes Faita's favourite easy-to-make recipes from the series as well as extra trips, recipe notes and substitutions.

The book covers everything from breakfast and dinner to salads, snacks, desserts and more.

Among the specific recipes are: Buttermilk Fried Chicken, Mango Cabbage Slaw, Cajun Home Fries and more.

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Humph Day in Sochi

Women's bobsled.
Canadian duo successfully defends its title won in Vancouver

Canada's Kaillie Humphries, left, and Heather Moyse celebrate winning the gold medal in women's bobsled at the Sochi Winter Olympics in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia, on Wednesday. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kaillie Humphries arrived at the start house for her final bobsled run at the Sochi Games not knowing how much time she needed to make up to catch the leaders.

Her brakeman, Heather Moyse, knew but wasn't saying. She wanted her pilot to worry about her own run and not the clock.

"I just looked at her and I said, 'It's possible,'" Moyse said. "That's all Kaillie needed to know, that the gap wasn't closed but it was possible."

Humphries visualized the 17-turn track in her mind and set out to nail another consistent run. She delivered just that Wednesday night and it was enough to give them a second straight women's Olympic bobsled title, the first duo to achieve that goal.

"When I don't know times, I mean, ignorance is bliss," Humphries said.

The Canada 1 sled had a gap of 11-100ths of a second to close entering the final run. Moyse delivered with a strong push at the start, then Humphries took over from there.

Both were elated at the finish and satisfied knowing they did everything they could.

"For both of us to know we pushed the hardest we could have possibly pushed, I drove the track the very best that I knew how, when we got out of the sled on that fourth run both her and I — without even having to really say anything — knew that we had done everything in our power," Humphries said.

With at least a silver locked up, they had a nervous two-minute wait in the finish area as Elana Meyers and Lauryn Williams completed their final run.

"I never wish bad on people but I was thinking, 'Just make a few mistakes, please,'" Humphries said.

The pressure seemed to get to the Americans, who had a few wobbles down the Sanki Sliding Center track and came up one-10th of a second short.

It would be gold once again for the Canadians, who were underdogs when they won at the Vancouver Games four years ago but favourites this time around.

Humphries, from Calgary, and Moyse, from Summerside, P.E.I., finished with a four-run time of three minutes 50.61 seconds. Meyers and Williams were second in 3:50.71.

The United States also won bronze, with Jamie Greubel and Aja Evans finishing a full second off the lead in 3:51.61. Edmonton's Jenny Ciochetti and Chelsea Valois of Zenon Park, Sask., were 13th in the Canada 2 sled in 3:54.49. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"Winning gold is amazing, but walking away satisfied is better. After the third run I knew that if we did the business we could be on top."

Kaillie Humphries on overcoming a time deficit to win the women's bobsled.

Curling gold medal within Jacobs' reach

Canada skip Brad Jacobs throws a rock during a semifinal curling match against China on Wednesday in Sochi, Russia. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Brad Jacobs, Ryan Fry, E.J. Harnden and Ryan Harnden allowed themselves a few minutes — and just a few — to revel in securing an Olympic medal in men's curling for Canada.

The Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., team knew after its 10-6 semifinal win Wednesday over China the glow was finite. Canadians are as demanding of their curlers as they are of their hockey players at the Winter Olympics.

There is a gold medal for the taking Friday. Canada must elbow aside two-time world champion David Murdoch of Britain to get it and will start the game with hammer.

"To get another medal for all of Team Canada is a great feeling, but at the same time, we want to come out and we want to get that gold," Jacobs said.

Rejuvenated from a two-day break, the Canadians unveiled their various weapons — finesse shots and hits — for their best game of the tournament against China.

"There's a little bit of brilliance left in us for that final game," second Harnden said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Double-gold hope

Canada is chasing double curling gold in Sochi. Jennifer Jones' Winnipeg rink meets Sweden's Margaretha Sigfridsson in Thursday's championship game.

- Canadian downed Britain's Eve Muirhead 6-4 in their semifinal earlier Wednesday.

4 SPORTS

Hey Yzerman, 'you're lucky'

Goalier than thou.
Lightning prospect stands on his head in front of future GM as Latvians almost slay Goliath in Sochi

BRUCE BENNETT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

As Kristers Gudlevskis turned aside shot after shot, Sidney Crosby and his teammates wondered what it would take to beat the Latvian goaltender.

"Besides picking the puck up and throwing it in the net, what could you tell someone to do in those situations?" Crosby said.

Team Canada didn't quite have to resort to that, surviving a historic upset bid by Latvia with a 2-1 win in the quarter-finals of the Olympics on the strength of a late power-play goal by Shea Weber.

Despite Gudlevskis making 55 saves on 57 shots, coach Mike Babcock didn't sense any uneasiness on his bench. It's his hope that being in a tight, frustrating game will help Canada as it advances to face the rival Americans in the semifinals Friday.

"We just thought if we kept doing it, we'd get our chances, we'd get a break, we'd score a goal," Babcock said. "Did I want to win 7-1? Absolutely. Do I think it's better for my team that we won the way we did? For sure."

The next one looks tougher on paper than any of Canada's first four games in Sochi. At first glance, a matchup against 11th-seeded Latvia didn't seem like it would be much of a test for the gold-medal favourites.

Canada, Babcock insisted, did not take Latvia lightly. Watching coach Ted Nolan's group eliminate Switzerland should have been enough of a wake-up call.

Still, it was hard to expect this. After Patrick Sharp gave Canada a lead at the 13:37 mark of the first period, it looked like Gudlevskis wouldn't get beat again and the frustration crept in.

"It can get to you, I think, a little bit," winger Patrick Marleau said. "But you just got to keep persisting and think that next one's going to go in."

It didn't help that most of the game elapsed with a tie score after Lauris Darzins got a breakaway and beat Carey Price two minutes after Sharp's goal. And it didn't help that Canada played almost two full periods without John Tavares, who was hit by Arturs Kulda and is out for the rest of the tournament with a knee injury.

A controversial no-goal call in the third period that could have led to a Canadian penalty shot only added to the drama.

All the while, Canada had Gudlevskis and the Latvians under siege but couldn't break through. It's one thing to squeeze the sticks a little too tight, but another one altogether to have a goalie looking like a brick wall.

"Coming into this tournament we talked about facing adversity," defenceman Duncan Keith said. "There was a little bit there throughout this game. We didn't want to get frustrated with the score being tied."

Told he scared the entire country of Canada on Wednesday night, Gudlevskis said: "I hope so." Asked what he'd say to Team Canada executive director and Lightning general manager Steve Yzerman, the 21-year-old responded: "You're lucky."

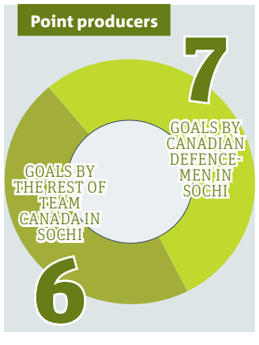
In Nolan's eyes, Canada was lucky to take the lead at 13:06 of the third after a slashing penalty was called on Georgijs Pujacs. But Babcock saw it more as the following-through on a game plan.

"We just thought we were going to win," he said. "We just talked about being patient and staying the course, not getting in a hurry, not forcing anything. If we did that we thought we'd be fine, and in the end we were."

That was one lesson Canada gleaned from this scare and almost joining the 2002 Swedish team that lost to Belarus in Salt Lake City in an infamous chapter of the Olympic history books: Winning matters more at this stage than how it happens.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Point producers



Americans up next

"They're obviously the favourite coming into the tournament, and we've opened up a lot of eyes with our play, but we have more in the tank to give and to show."

Max Pacioretty on the looming rematch of the 2010 gold-medal game with Canada. Pacioretty's Americans notched a 5-2 win over the Czech Republic on Wednesday. Canada and the U.S. meet in the semifinal on Friday.

Cross-border semi No. 2

"I think the Russian team will win."

Sweden coach Par Marts making a prediction after his team's 5-0 win over Slovenia, but before the Russia-Finland quarter-final. Finland coach Erkka Westerlund said "no comment" when asked for his reaction to what Marts said, and Finn forward Olli Jokinen added: "I don't really care." The Scandinavian rivals meet in the semifinals Friday.

Game of his life

"We were disappointed, because we tried to make a miracle today and we just couldn't do it."

Latvia's Kristers Gudlevskis, who stopped 55 shots and gave hockey fans across Canada cause for major concern on Wednesday afternoon.

Questionable call

C'mon ref!

It looked like Canada took the lead 8:27 into the third, but a controversial call kept it 1-1. Jonathan Toews and Patrick Marleau got the puck to the goal-line and almost over, but Latvia defenceman Kristaps Sotnieks gloved it to keep it out.

The ruling was that the puck did not fully cross the line, and Canada did not get a penalty shot because that cannot be awarded on review.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

'You never know'

Russian hopes Finn-ished

After Russia's men's hockey loss in the quarter-finals to Finland, most of Russia's players rushed through a mixed zone with TV cameras and reporters without stopping, waving off requests to verbalize their disappointment in losing their medal chances in the Sochi Games.

The players who did stop were brief. And Finland, not surprisingly, had a little more to say, with many sentiments summed up by forward Teemu Selanne:

"The experts are wrong many times — and I love it."

Still, as happy as the Finns were, they did show some sympathy for a Russian team that was carrying such high expectations.

Selanne: "I'm a little bit sad also for them. Obviously, they had a big dream to win the gold medal here and then it doesn't work so it's kind of disappointing in many ways because that would be a great story. But again, it's proving to the hockey world that you never know."

Russia's Alex Ovechkin only had this to say: "No emotion right now."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russian hockey fans at the end of Russia's loss to Finland on Wednesday in Sochi. JULIO CORTEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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- Edmonton City Centre
- Kingsway Garden Mall
- Londonderry Mall
- Meyokumin Retail Centre
- Mill Woods Town Centre
- Namao Centre South
- Northgate Centre
- Oliver Square
- South Edmonton Common
- South Park Centre
- Southgate Mall – Kiosk
- St. Albert Trail at 137 Ave.
- Terra Losa Shopping Centre
- West Edmonton Mall
- West Edmonton Mall – Kiosk
- Westmount Centre

FORT MCMURRAY
- 19 Riedel St.
- Peter Pond Shopping Centre

GRANDE PRAIRIE
- Prairie Mall
- South 40 Shopping Centre

LETHBRIDGE
- Centre Village Mall – Kiosk
- Lethbridge Smart Centres
- Park Place

LLOYDMINSTER
- Lloyd Mall

MEDICINE HAT
- Carry Drive Plaza
- Medicine Hat Mall

PEACE RIVER
- 10032–100th St.

PINCHER CREEK
- Ranchland Mall – Kiosk

RED DEER
- Bower Place Shopping Centre
- Parkland Mall
- Southpointe Common

ROCKY VIEW
- Crossiron Mills Mall
- Crossiron Mills Mall – Kiosk

SHERWOOD PARK
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Experience on Canada's side vs. speedy U.S. team

Women's hockey.

Canuck squad will rely on leadership of vets when they take on rivals

To win a fourth straight Olympic gold medal, the Canadian women's hockey team must leverage its big-game experience up front to overcome the superior speed of the United States.

Canada's dozen forwards have a combined 18 previous appearances at the Winter Olympics among them compared to seven among the American forwards.

On defence, previous Winter Games experience is equal between the two countries. Both sides possess seasoned goaltenders.

Caroline Ouellette is in pursuit of her fourth Olympic gold medal.
BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

Thursday's final at the Bolshoy Ice Dome is about executing in a vice of pressure for both countries.

The U.S. wants to reclaim the gold it won in 1998 and this year's team is young and relentless.

If there is a crack in their armour, it was revealed in Canada's 3-2 victory in the preliminary round. Taking a 1-0 lead into the third period, the Americans lost their composure when Canada equalized early in the frame and pulled ahead less than two minutes later.

So it will be up to three-time gold medallists Caroline Ouellette, Hayley Wickenheiser and Jayna Hefford, as well as third-time Olympians Meghan Agosta-Marciano and Gillian Apps to shepherd Canada through the defining moment or moments of the gold-medal game.

They are "great players who have been in an Olympics or two," coach Kevin Dineen said. "They've sat in this seat before." THE CANADIAN PRESS

MEDALS

Nation	G	S	B	Tot.
United States of America	7	5	11	23
Russian Federation	6	9	7	22
Netherlands	6	7	9	22
Norway	9	4	7	20
Canada	**5**	**9**	**4**	**18**
Germany	8	3	4	15

WHAT CANADA DID

WEDNESDAY

ALPINE SKIING

Men's Giant Slalom - Trevor Philp of Calgary was the top Canadian after the two runs, placing 25th (two minutes 49.55 seconds, +4.26 seconds). Phil Brown of Toronto was 29th (2:49.91) and Morgan Pridy of Whistler, B.C., was 33rd (2:51.96).

BIATHLON

2x6km Women + 2x7.5 km Men Mixed Relay - The Canadian team of Megan Imrie (Falcon Lake, Man.), Rosanna Crawford (Canmore, Alta.), Brendan Green (Hay River, N.W.T.) and Scott Perras (Regina), finished 12th with a time of one hour, 13 minutes and 27.7 seconds, four minutes and 10.7 seconds behind gold medallist Norway.

BOBSLEIGH

Women's - Kaillie Humphries (Calgary) and Heather Moyse (Summerside. P.E.I.), successfully defended their **gold medal** with a four-run time of three minutes 50.61 seconds, erasing a 0.23 deficit going into the final two runs to beat United States 1 by a tenth-of-a-second. Jennifer Ciochetti (Edmonton) and Chelsea Valois (Zenon Park, Sask.) placed 13th (3:54.49).

CROSS-COUNTRY

Ladies' Team Sprint ClassicSemifinal - Daria Gaiazova (Banff, Alta.) and Perianne Jones (Almonte, Ont.) were fifth out of the nine teams in their group and did not advance.

Men's Team Sprint Classic Semifinals - Alex Harvey (St. Ferreol-les-Neiges, Que.) and Devon Kershaw (Sudbury, Ont.) were sixth out of 11 teams in their group and did not advance.

CURLING

Women's Semifinal - Canada defeated Great Britain 6-4 and plays Sweden in the gold medal match on Thursday.

Men's Semifinal - Canada defeated China 10-6 and will face Great Britain for the gold medal on Friday.

FIGURE SKATING

Ladies Short Program - Kaetlyn Osmond (Sherwood Park, Alta.) placed 13th with 56.18 points and Gabrielle Daleman (Newmarket, Ont.) was 19th with 52.61 going into Thursday's free program.

ICE HOCKEY

Men's Quarter-final - Canada defeated Latvia 2-1 and will play the U.S. in the semifinal game on Friday.

SNOWBOARD

Ladies' Parallel Giant Slalom - Marianne Leeson (Burlington, Ont.) placed 5th overall, Caroline Calve (Aylmer, Que.) took 6th and Ariane Lavigne (Lac-Superieur, Que.) was 8th. Each lost their quarter-final race.

Men's Parallel Giant Slalom - Defending gold medallist Jasey Jay Anderson, of Mont-Tremblant, Que., and Matt Morison of Burketon, Ont., made it through qualifying but were eliminated in the next round. Michael Lambert of Toronto failed to made it through qualifying. Anderson placed 14th overall, Morison 15th and Lambert 27th.

SPEED SKATING

Ladies' 5000 m - Ivanie Blondon of Ottawa placed 14th overall with a time of seven minutes 20.10 seconds, 28.56 seconds behind gold medallist Martina Sablikova of the Czech Republic.

CURLING

At Sochi, Russia
All Times Eastern
MEN
Wednesday's results
SEMIFINALS
Canada 10 China 6
Britain 6 Sweden 5
Tuesday's results
TIEBREAKER
Britain 6 Norway 5
Friday's games
BRONZE MEDAL
Sweden vs. China, 3:30 a.m.
GOLD MEDAL
Britain vs. **Canada**, 8:30 a.m.
WOMEN
Wednesday's results
SEMIFINALS
Canada 6 Britain 4
Sweden 7 Switzerland 5
Thursday's games
BRONZE MEDAL
Britain vs. Switzerland, 3:30 a.m.
GOLD MEDAL
Canada vs. Sweden, 8:30 a.m.

HOCKEY

All times Eastern
MEN
Wednesday's results
QUARTERFINALS
Canada 2 Latvia 1
Sweden 5 Slovenia 0
Finland 3 Russia 1
United States 5 Czech Republic 2
Friday's games
SEMIFINALS
Sweden at Finland, 7 a.m.
Canada at United States, 12 p.m.
Saturday's game
BRONZE MEDAL GAME
Semifinal losers, 10 a.m.
Sunday's game
GOLD MEDAL GAME
Semifinal winners, 7 a.m.

CANADA 2, LATVIA 1

First Period
1. Canada, Sharp 1 (Nash) 13:37.
2. Latvia, Darzins 1 (Kulda, Sprukts) 15:41.
Penalties — Sharp Cda (tripping) 6:18, Keith Cda (broken stick) 16:02.
Second Period — No Scoring.
Penalties — Girgensons Lat (slashing) 5:37, St. Louis Cda (slashing) 10:21, Ozolinsh Lat (high-sticking) 19:33.
Third Period
3. Canada, Weber 1 (Doughty, Toews) 13:06 (pp).
Penalties — Pujacs Lat (slashing) 11:09.
Shots

Latvia	6	5	5—16
Canada	16	19	22—57

Goal — Latvia: Gudlevskis (L); Canada: Price (W). **Power plays (goal-chances) —** Latvia: 0-3; Canada: 1-3.
Referees — Tim Peel, Jyri Ronn. **Linesmen** — Brad Kovachik, Sakari Suominen.
Attendance — 9,825 at Sochi, Russia.
WOMEN
Thursday's games
BRONZE MEDAL GAME
Switzerland at Sweden, 7 a.m.
GOLD MEDAL GAME
Canada at United States, 12 p.m.

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
There are a lot of things you need to consider, things that may be of benefit to you in the not too distant future, so don't waste your time socializing when you should be thinking.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Aim to make new friends over the next 24 hours, especially with people whose interests are in some way out of the ordinary. It's not true that Taurus is old-fashioned. In fact, you can be a bit of a rebel.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You will come under pressure today, especially at work where someone in a position of authority will do their best to make life miserable for you. Stay cool and don't let them provoke you.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
It is time to move on, with no regrets, no backward glances and no promises that if things don't work out you can always go back. Draw a line in the sand, step across it and embrace the new you.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
It will pay you to be ruthless today, especially when dealing with people who always seem to get more out of your relationship than you. Look tough, talk tough and, when the time comes, act tough too.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
It may seem as if you're dancing to everyone's tune. Why is that bad? Sometimes it's nice to sit back and let others worry about where to go and what to do next.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Stop worrying about all the little things that may or may not be going wrong and concentrate on the one big thing you would most like to go right. Focus your mind power in a single direction.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Put your own interests first. The Sun in Pisces is giving you a boost of confidence, so make the most of it and make sure everyone knows where you are coming from and what you intend to do.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
As the Sun is moving through the domestic area of your chart it will pay you to focus more on family members than on yourself or your work.

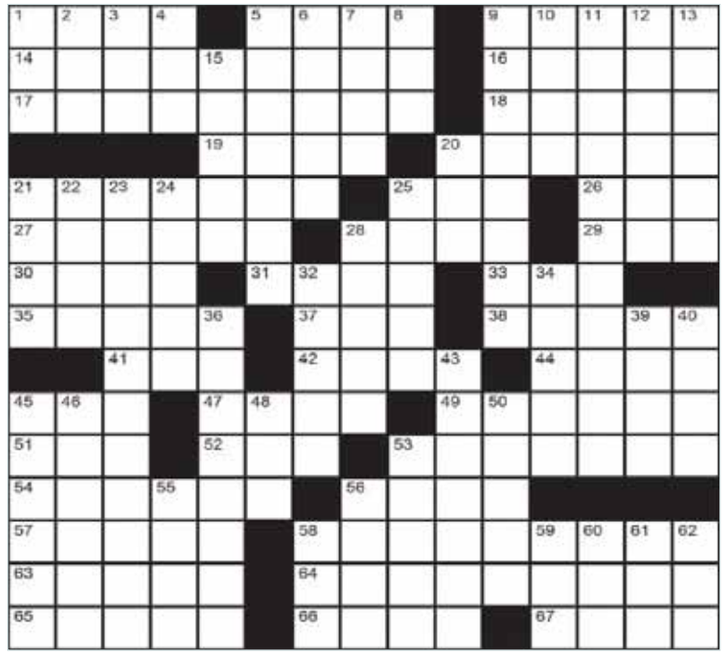
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Let people know what is on your mind today. If you keep your thoughts to yourself you will not only feel isolated but you will miss out on a chance to influence the great debate.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Limit spending to essentials today. You know how easy it is to reach into your pocket and find cash for this or that but if you do that now you may have nothing left for the weekend.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Make the most of the Sun in your sign to do something out of the ordinary, something that makes the world sit up and take notice. Don't worry that what you do may be seen as "controversial" — the more people you offend the better.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down



See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN

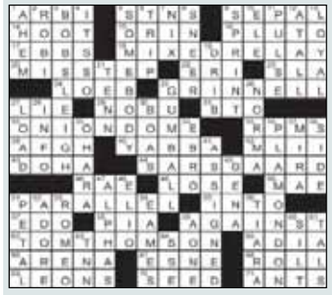
Across

1. SOCHI 2014 - Ice Hockey venue, Bolshoy Ice __
5. Military cap
9. Derek & The Dominos song
14. Inuit language
16. Dainty cases
17. Contemporary creation: 2 wds.
18. SOCHI 2014 - Rus-Ski __ Ski Jumping Center
19. SOCHI 2014 - 'I' of IOC [abbr.]
20. "You Needed Me" bit: "_ __ a tear..."
21. Fifty Shades of Grey novelist, _._. __
25. Ford product
26. See, in Dutch
27. Author, __ May Alcott
28. __ fide
29. Elevs.
30. 17th-century sailor, Captain __
31. Unique
33. Caesar's 1051
35. Choler
37. Fire: French
38. Canadian guitarist renowned for Mediterranean music
41. Time
42. Fruit-filled pastry
44. Singer Mr. Cruz
45. Seed holder
47. Search
49. Actor Mr. Hauer
51. Pre-afternoon hrs.
52. __ excellence
53. Go to a restaurant: 2 wds.
54. Relishes: 2 wds.
56. Examination
57. "That was _ __!" (I had fun!)
58. Body of water for Saint Petersburg, Russia: 2 wds.
63. "Do you get the birthday __ _ sent?"
64. 'We Were Born to Glory' Canadian singer/songwriter: 2 wds.
65. Shakira album: 'Donde __ los Ladrones?'
66. Formal gr.
67. Leave out

Down

1. Faint
2. Yoko's surname
3. Soaked soil
4. Barely get by
5. Actor Greg
6. Les __-Unis (United States, in French)
7. Knitting stitch
8. Addams Family relative
9. Painful 'pin' problem: 2 wds.
10. 'Origin' suffix
11. Doctor played by Omar Sharif: 2 wds.
12. Appreciate something: 2 wds.
13. Digressions
15. Pares
20. Sir McKellen link
21. "Hot in Cleveland" role
22. Meat cut
23. SOCHI 2014 - Figure Skating, for example: 2 wds.
24. Helpful human
25. Heart: French
28. Crack
32. Following
34. Coffee order
36. Boney M. disco hit
39. Stead
40. __ cloud, as per Astronomy
43. Soap opera star Mr. Rogers
45. Royal residence
46. "Mutual of __ Wild Kingdom"
48. The Raven writer's monogram
50. Up to
53. Quebec's flag symbol, Fleur-__-__ [var. sp.]
55. Pop
56. Artsy spot in New Mexico
58. Undergarment
59. Mountain basin
60. "...or __ _ thought."
61. Dawn goddess
62. Promos

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

2					3	9	7	
	5			1		3	2	
4			5					6
				5			1	8
		3				5		
5	7			2				
1					8			2
	8	5		6			4	
	9	2	7					1

Yesterday's Sudoku

3	6	4	9	7	2	5	8	1
5	9	1	6	8	3	7	4	2
8	7	2	5	4	1	9	3	6
9	2	8	3	6	5	4	1	7
7	1	5	4	2	9	3	6	8
4	3	6	8	1	7	2	9	5
1	5	3	2	9	6	8	7	4
6	4	9	7	5	8	1	2	3
2	8	7	1	3	4	6	5	9

Weather

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MAX: 1° MIN: -9°	MAX: -9° MIN: -11°	MAX: -5° MIN: -18°

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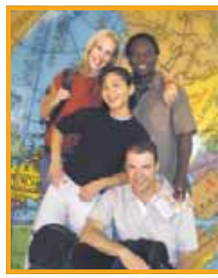
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